



Networking

By Kim Bartel

“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” This is, to some extent, true when it comes to finding a job. You may have heard about “networking” and the “hidden job market”. These jobs aren’t usually advertised but are filled by promotion or a referral. Simply put, a firm has a job opening and the recruiter asks if anyone knows someone who would be interested.

Why would firms recruit like this?

Don’t we all feel more comfortable and confident when we have a referral? Many firms like to hire people using this same strategy. A personal referral is perceived as a good way to hire good people. It saves time and money to hire based on a recommendation.

What does this mean?

It means that if you are looking for a job, let people know. Work to build relationships by asking advice, asking if they know of people you can contact, and asking if they have heard of any job opportunities.

Don’t be shy!

Good networking is mutually beneficial because you get a job and the employer gets an employee. Networking isn’t begging for a job, it is building relationships and seeking information.

Who?

Start with people you know. Ask if they know anyone you can contact. Contact these “referrals”. When you meet with referrals, ask them for referrals. Try “cold calling”. You can contact people you don’t know and ask for informational interviews.

Get going!

Make a list of contacts. When you contact a referral, introduce yourself, state your purpose and request a meeting. Prepare a list of questions for the meeting. Ask referrals if they know other people you can contact. Write thank you notes and keep a log of your contacts. It would be embarrassing to hear from someone and not be able to remember them.

On the Web

<http://dmoz.org/Society/People/Women/Career/>
<http://www.advancingwomen.com/Networks/index.html>
<http://www.bluesuitmom.com/career/changingjobs/advice/networkingqa.html>